

# OCTOBER LEAVES

HENRY A. MILES, D.D.

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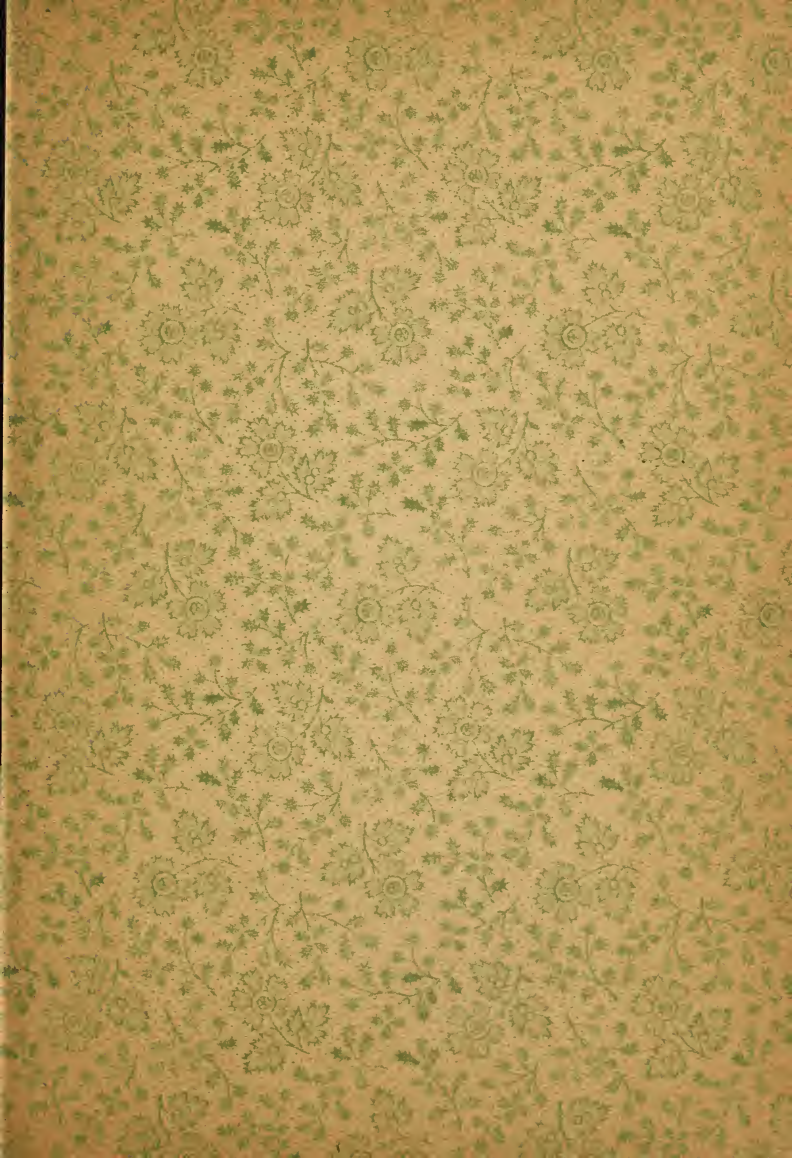


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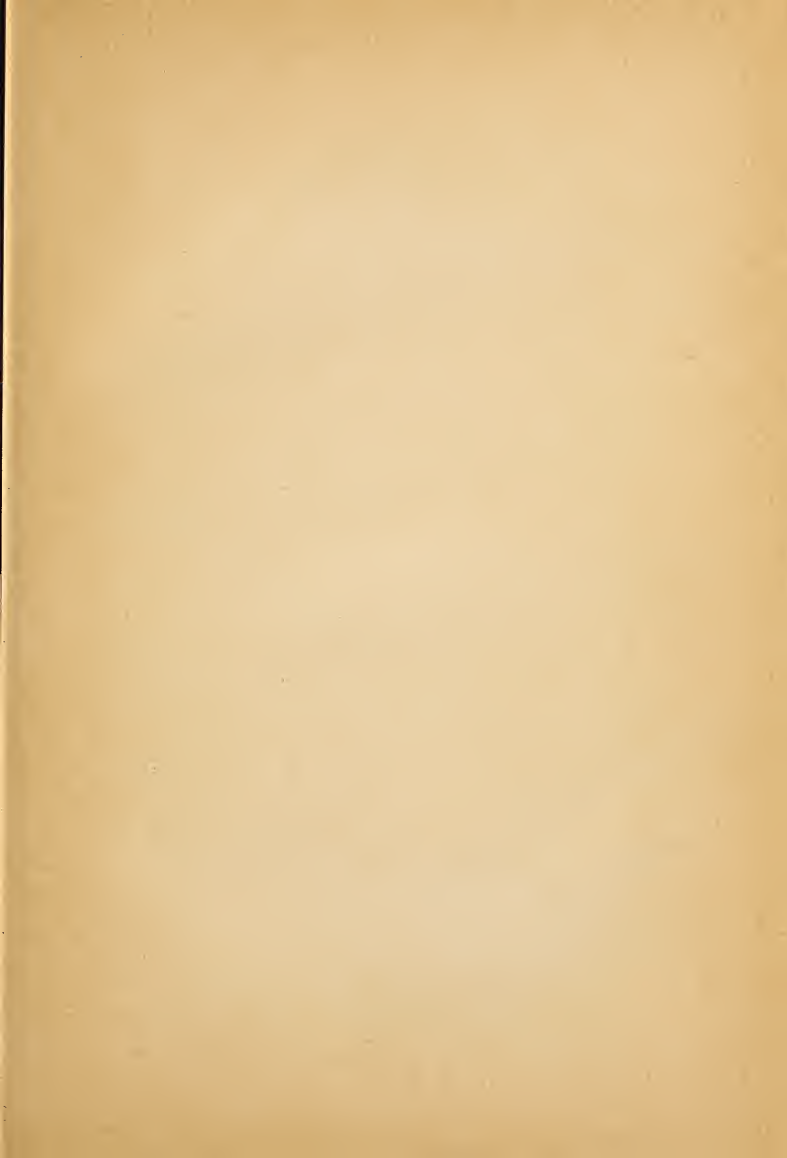
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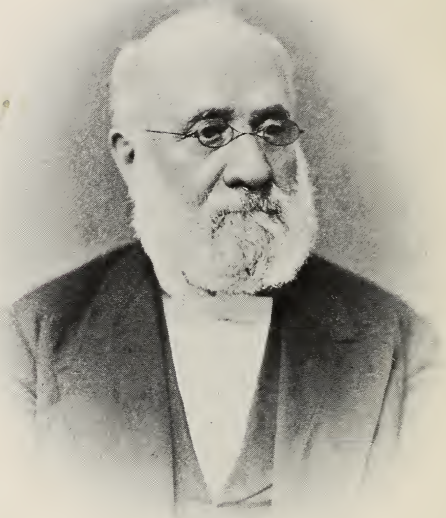












Henry A. Miles.



# OCTOBER LEAVES

HENRY A. MILES, D.D.



BOSTON

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## PREFACE.

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FROM a pile of manuscripts, consisting of addresses, lectures, homilies, and articles for reviews and journals, the following selections are severed from conventional adaptations to occasions. They have been written in a professional life of more than sixty years, pursued with unambitious aims, with no zeal for sectarian extension, and with few interruptions by annoying superficial activities. An old age of leisure and good health has given prolonged opportunities for studies in sacred letters, which have always been my occupation and delight. As I am now far advanced in the October of my life, I may call these few pages a little bunch of October Leaves.

H. A. M.



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STEPS TOWARDS THE  
HIGHEST



## STEPS TOWARDS THE HIGHEST.

SOME seem to think that the existence of God should be proved by a solid chain of argument, and should be the product of a demonstration as certain as the amount of five added to five.

Who does not know this is far from being the fact? There is no such thing as a scientific proof. Philosophers have long searched for it. Not that they needed it. Most of them had a conviction to which demonstration could add no strength. They have been fascinated by the problem. Its solution would immortalize them. It would be a triumph, like the quadrature of the circle or the invention of perpetual motion. No one has succeeded. Thence the history of moral philosophy all through the ages shows the wrecks of baffled attempts.

The cause is very obvious. Our science, our logic,—such good things in their place,—are poor things when applied to God. A mere atom called man on one side, and an infinite being on the other side, can at first be described only by con-

trasts. Who would set out to measure by a ten-foot pole the distance from us of the planet Neptune, remote many millions of miles? There must be some approximation of the measurer to the measured. Our conditions of thought, our comparisons, our discriminations, our intellectual processes, all break down when transferred to a subject so much above their reach.

Evidently, God did not intend that he should be cognizable by such instruments. He is outside, beyond, and above them all. Were he not, he would not be an infinite object. Some one, who has a narrow, sharp mind, says he cannot prove that there is a God. I am glad he cannot. I should not wish to believe in a God whose dimensions were not too large for him to grasp.

Is all this the same as saying that God cannot be known at all? Far otherwise. It is only admitting that capacities fitted for the finite are misplaced when turned to the infinite. A microscope is serviceable to examine the wing of a fly; but, if you would trace the belts of Saturn, you must change the instrument. When you come to deal with the vision of God, you must change your instrument. That part of your nature which

relates to the bounded is not here available. You must turn to that other part of your nature which has relations with the boundless.

You need not go far to find it. In reading the old arguments to prove the existence of God, it seems as if it were thought there was need of something recondite, far-fetched, requiring to be stated with a precision and strength never before reached. Men have looked through the human mind and through all history, to make the discovery. But there is no necessity to ask, Who shall ascend up to heaven — that is, to bring God down — or who shall descend into the deep — that is, to bring God up? for, lo! he is in thine own heart. “He that loveth not knoweth not God.” This is more than a Scriptural text. It is a psychological fact.

We must not take that word “love” in any literal or narrow way. It is the misfortune of all language that expressions often lose the breadth of meaning that filled their primal utterance. They contract a shrivelled sense. It is not merely our affections that are here referred to, but our aspirations, our tastes, our imaginings, our longings, our conceptions of the pure, the perfect, the

beautiful, the eternal. In other words, it is our entire emotional and æsthetic equipment. Who can give an exhaustive description even of such a being as *man* if all this be left out?

Here is the fourth story of a nature which, beginning in bodily sensations, rising up to instinct, ascending then to intellect, finds its completion in a forefeeling of something grander and diviner. It is in the nature of every thoughtful man. It is the inspiration of all true poetry, the life breath of all high art, the spur to progress, the rebound against hard and coarse realities, the tastes that cherish supernal purity, the windows through which we look into the ideal, the wings on which we soar in the visions of hope, the impulse to all real nobleness and grandeur. Here also is the topmost attainable knowledge. It is not logic, but soul.

We are so accustomed to speak of knowledge as coming to us through intellectual processes that we are not quick to see that it can come to us in any other way. An age which exalts books, schools, colleges, statistics, science, and which trains the eye, the hand, the memory, the common sense, is prone to distrust everything that

rests only on what we poorly call the feeling. And yet *feeling*, using the word as denoting what is large and upward-tending — does it not constitute a part of our spiritual antennæ, and give a certainty beyond formal proof?

You will not be slow to recognize this if you remember in how many cases knowledge comes through love. The sculptor, the painter, the musician, may easily know the implements, the methods, the aims of his art; but it is love alone which discloses to him its profoundest mysteries, and makes him sure that nothing else is worth living for. The same fact is to some degree true in other professions where feeling leads to the deepest knowledge.

You really know your child only after you have loved it. The record in the old family Bible or in the office of the municipal clerk, even if it be certified under oath by a dozen witnesses, cannot bring the certainty you will have when the young life has twined around your heart-strings. What else but love has made it yours?

If you look beyond a natural instinct, how do you know the friend who, of all human beings, has come closest to your heart? Suppose a

tricky logician should try to show you that you have no scientific certainty of your friend's existence, telling you that all your evidence on that point is not trustworthy, that your eyes and ears deceive you, that you may have been in a dream in all your friendly intercourse with him, and so casting a cloud of doubt over your mind, as if you had been a victim of a lifelong delusion.

You would have a short answer to all that. You would say: As I do not find, so I shall not lose my friend by a syllogism. I cannot demonstrate that he is not a phantom. But that failure is nothing to me. I know him by something which none of your talk disturbs. He lives in my soul. He is intertwined with every fibre of my heart. Where is there anything which is more truly a reality?

Steps towards God? I find them in the indestructible sense of right; in the conviction that a moral purpose runs through the affairs of this world; in the triumphant faith that there is here on earth a progressive order tending to human perfectibility; in the unconquerable trust that all seeming inequalities will one day be readjusted;



in every conception of what is perfect in goodness and beauty; in every filial hope clinging to a father's arm. God is the response to all that is highest and divinest in my nature.

The heart that is never swept by these profound emotions may not admit the existence of God. I think it a compliment to the grandeur of that idea. It must be a God after a small pattern whom such a soul can comprehend. Standing on the shore of some petty inland creek, one may have a poor conception of the vast extent and sublime power of the ocean, and may even deny that there is such a thing. Is it through insufficiency of proof, or is it through the position of the observer? Climb up to the top of some projecting headland, and see what you think then. Meanwhile the ocean is *there*, majestic, boundless, irresistible, in spite of all your doubts.

But it must not be forgotten that oftentimes we have no choice, and no easy change of our position. We must act our part where our lot is cast by birth, early impressions, education, companionship, and the successes and failures of life. He who has placed us here knows what

influence upon us visible and palpable objects most necessarily have. Are we sure that in the case of the young this is too dominating in a world where they make their start, and have their first duties to perform?

They do not at birth come in possession even of all their bodily possibilities. Some of these are of later growth,—the use of their eyes, feet, hands, teeth, their healthful digestion, their manly strength. It is not strange that there should be a like tardy development of other faculties,—their thoughtfulness, comparison, generalization, reason, their love of right, truth, beauty, unselfishness, their reverence for what is enduring and eternal.

Let it be added that, when they attain to a maturer judgment, many come under the influence of superstitious and revolting representations of God. It is more praiseworthy to disbelieve in him than to believe in such creeds. As Plutarch writes in his essay on "Indiscreet Devotion," "Better say such a person did not exist than to affirm he was a hard, cruel tyrant."

Why should we underrate the religious value of a doubt if it be held with humility, and keeps

the mind open and alert to inquiry? We need a more tender forbearance. It is a profound remark of Bishop Butler,—that “it is not so much our being free from doubt as our manner of treating it that gives scope to a moral discipline.” It would have been easy “for God to compel our assent.” But on this point we do not live under a law of force. We are invited by gentle persuasion. So much is our freedom respected. This is godlike. It wins our attention, encourages patiently and tenderly our aspirations, and even asks the co-operation of our affections and will. And what, on the whole, do we find the result to be? Are there many who die as absolute atheists?



THE NAME ABOVE EVERY  
NAME



## THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME.

It is noteworthy that, after nearly two thousand years of controversy, we find the best answer to this question was given by the first Christian writer,—first in time as well as ability. He had broad views. He appears to have cast his eye over the course of history. He went back to the creation; and, as he saw in Adam the progenitor of human beings, so he saw in the second Adam the progenitor of a renewed spiritual race.

And what does he say? If he thought of any thing more important to affirm, he probably would have stated *that*. The needs of the times, the needs of his own perilous condition, the needs of his hopes for the success of his cause, required the most distinctive title he could announce. He defines Jesus to be “a quickening spirit,”—not a philosopher, not an orator, not a reasoner, not a discoverer of new truths, not the inventor of new arts, not a warrior, not a conqueror, not the head of an ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Because he was not an example of any of these types of distinction, we are apt to under-rate the greatness that was his. A few poor parallels may show what that greatness was, and show it better than any argument. If they be taken from common life, they may make us feel in what way our nature is most deeply moved, and may illustrate this influence in a world-wide agency.

There comes into your town a man who has brought a new life there. He has broken the ice which had frozen everything. He has awakened fresh social sympathies, led many unconsciously to catch his tastes, aims, and habits; and, while hearts have been drawn to him, they have been drawn to one another. In time he has lifted up your whole neighborhood. You find the springs of its progress all centring in him.

Who is he that has done this? He has not the wealth, the social position, the learning, the eloquence, which others possess. He makes no noise in the world, aims at no immediate startling effects, follows his course in a self-restrained way; but, somehow, an influence goes out from him, beginning at first with his nearest associ-



ates, working silently to outer circles, until he becomes the magnet of his little world. What is it that achieves this?

It is not fully satisfying to hear the answers to this question. Some quote the words he has spoken, and yet similar words have been uttered without effect a hundred times before. Some point to the sincerity of his character, but many a mistaken and inefficient man has been equally sincere. Some refer to the moral beauty and goodness of his life, forgetting how often these have had no commanding powers. The sources of personal influence are often obscure. No two writers would agree in describing them. But, beyond all analysis and argument, one fact is clear: the man referred to has been "a quickening spirit." These are very simple words, but they have a deep meaning. And what accounts better for what he has done?

An inspiring power is seen in another case. The school-teacher who is most successful does not necessarily have the profoundest knowledge, does not show the greatest number of diplomas, does not rule his classes with the exactness of military drill, does not attract the widest outside

attention. It is the instructor of whom it may be said that his kingdom is in the hearts of his pupils.

You would smile at one who should ascribe his influence to any external cause,—such as bodily size and strength, or descent in an eminent pedigree, or the name of the school, or the plan of the school-house, or the peculiar methods he employs, or any supposed fabulous arts. We must go back of all these things. We must recognize influences occult, but deep and certain, awakening ambition, elevating aspirations, giving life and earnestness to all processes of learning. Do we not find the summit of success where there is “a quickening spirit”?

Then, again, let us look to the mother in the midst of her household. Perhaps it seems strange that she should have such a formative influence. She has no outward constraint, like that of the father of the family, he peremptory and she gentle, he hurrying and she quiet, he anxious to have certain ends accomplished and she more thoughtful of the temper in which they should be undertaken, he filling his home with anxious cares and she diffusing a serene atmosphere in every room and in every heart.

Which does the most for the souls of the home circle? Whose spirit best wins affection? To whom do children most freely repair for sympathy and counsel? Whom are they most careful not to displease? Whose image stands before them as the guiding star of their life, and is remembered with undying love?

We all know the answer to these questions. It is the parent—usually the mother, though not always so—who is the “quickenings spirit.” If we think that he to whom these words were at first applied had a large endowment of feminine qualities, this is not disproved by his knowledge of the deep springs of action in our nature and his sublime trust in them.

Another illustration in a lowly sphere may be pardoned. It is drawn from a fact in one of the large hospitals in Washington during the War of the Rebellion. Provision had been made for the badly wounded, and hundreds of our soldiers were there under surgical care for months. Among the nurses was one woman whom none of the sufferers ever forgot.

It was no charm of youth, no personal beauty, no rich attire, no medical science or skill, that

gave her prominence. Her singular influence, some might say, might have been in part explained if she had been connected with persons in power. But no one knew who she was. Nurses came from different Northern States ; and she went unheralded and unknown, one among a hundred. She may have been born in a stable, and had not where to lay her head.

But she had not long been there before her superior influence was felt. It was not so much what she said and did as her supreme power to touch human hearts. There was something radiating from her looks, from the tone of her voice, the outpouring of her soul, which won the love of every one there. The convalescent drew health from her presence, the dying fixed on her their closing eye. She became the angel of the hospital, the Messiah of that little world.

Who cannot interpret all this by something in his own observation? While the influence of the good man who comes into your town ceases, to a considerable but not entire degree, with the generation in which he lives, and the teacher's uplifting power rarely extends beyond his school, and the mother's formative care is confined

chiefly to her family, and the angel of the hospital was little known beyond its wards, One there was whose field was the world. But all worked on essentially the same principles, with a proof of like success. His name is above every name.

And how marked has been the result with him last named! We look in vain for any vestiges of those great heroes, Alexander and Cæsar, who had the whole world at their beck. As to the old philosophers, we ask, Where are their famous schools, and who counts up their crowds of followers? But he who worked not with force or logic or arguments, whose dominion was in the heart, in the duties, hopes, and trusts which belong to the human soul everywhere, in all countries, in all time,—his empire has been forever growing, is now a thousand-fold greater than in the first centuries of our era, and will grow the more men understand what is deepest in their nature.

Compared with the grandeur and sublimity of his aim, how ridiculous are all our poor strifes about orthodoxy or heterodoxy, trinity or unity, much or little water in baptism, standing or

kneeling in worship, printed litanies or extemporary prayers, the duration of future punishment, the possibility of *post-mortem* repentance ! Can anything be more childish and contemptible ?

And yet even these may be regarded with some softening pity. We must remember that fighting has been almost the natural state of the childhood of our race. As in the case of pugnacity in boyhood, it may serve to wake up dormant energies and give needed strength to character. We do not know what might have taken the place of contentions about religion if these had been put away. Something worse, perhaps. Certainly, they are not the most dishonorable to our nature ; and they are probably less than one-tenth of the many causes of bloodshed.

THE GREATEST ARTIST





## THE GREATEST ARTIST.

THE impression of anything unfitting in this title may be relieved by remembering that renowned sculptors and painters have called the parables of the Gospels models of the divinest art and beauty. Working not on marble or canvas, but on words, how their author must have loved them, when he finished them with marvellous delicacy and power !

Let us consider the conditions of his time. It was more than a thousand years before the art of printing. Writing was not common. It is not known that Jesus wrote a single manuscript. His hearers were not habitual readers. It was hence needful that everything should be put in a form easy to be understood at a glance. A story met the want.

But the story must be short, condensed into two or three sentences. Its costume must be taken from the then common life, so as to call for no explanation. It must be aside from the tales in everybody's mouth. It must make a

winged appeal to the curiosity, the imagination, the affections, in order to obtain a lodgment in the mind.

No doubt the artist saw all these conditions. Had he lived a few hundred years earlier, in the time of Socrates and Plato, he would probably have followed their fashion, and taught by dialogues, developing the truth by the sharp use of question and answer. Had the sphere of his labors been in Rome, he doubtless would have written treatises and dissertations, like Cicero and his contemporaries. Had he widely travelled, he might have sent out Epistles after the example of Saint Paul and Seneca. In our day he would have published a book.

A few of his most docile followers he sent out to repeat to others the words they had heard from his lips. Of course, they were illiterate men, and were filled with the obstinate prejudices of their race. But they were the only helpers he had. His occasional expressions of impatience with them—"Have I been so long with you, and yet hast thou not known me?" "Are ye even yet without understanding?" "How long must I be with you, and bear with

you?"—are so natural and human that they bring him nearer to us.

All this shows how his choice of methods was restricted. With the people whom he sought to teach there was but one thing he could do. With prompt decision and marked good sense he addressed himself to that, set about nothing else, made himself here a master artist of whose word-pictures the whole world has taken note.

We cannot expect to find here a great scene like a fresco that covers the whole side of a chapel, or a broad-spreading canvas to adorn the walls of a cathedral. We have only a *miniature*, as we may say. Often there is but one figure in it, as in the picture of the man building his house on the sand, or in that of the sower, or in that of the lost sheep, or in that of the unjust steward. Again we find only two figures, as in the sketch of the publican and the Pharisee, or in that of the rich man and the beggar. Where there are more figures, they are usually gathered into groups, as in that of the wise and foolish virgins, of the laborers in the vineyard, and of the prodigal son.

In every case all is brought into a small com-

pass, where the outline, perspective, and coloring must be carefully studied. Little will be learned by the hasty glance given to whole yards of canvas.

Who has not noticed how skilfully little side facts are introduced, though not necessary for the substance of the story, and yet essential for its picturesque effect? Nothing will so clearly set this before us as an example. Let us take the parable of the lost sheep.

A mere matter-of-fact relater would have said, "the shepherd left his flock in order to find one that had wandered, and found it and brought it back." That was the bare event. But does it make a picture? Nothing of the kind.

Now what is it in the hands of the great artist? The whole scene is illuminated before our eyes. We seem to see how naturally the shepherd thinks of the lost one more than of all the flock beside, how the others are left in the wilderness, how he searches round the rocks and up the mountain-sides, how he never gives up, but persists until he finds the one that has strayed, how he lovingly lays it on his shoulders, how he returns with a quick step, and gladly

invites his friends to share his joy, how he calls this lost one "my" sheep, as if his whole heart was centred on this alone.

Here is the picture. Who can doubt that all these accessories were put in so as to make it beautiful? Did it not please his eye, as it has pleased the eye of the whole world? Can it fail to please us if we will carefully study this little gem? Of course, only one or two brief touches are introduced by way of finish. The size of the painting admitted no more. But they are the touches of a master-hand. They give life to the scene, and make us feel that the Good Shepherd of all souls loves us, though we have wandered, seeks us when we are lost on the dark mountain, would take us tenderly in his arms, will still call us his sheep, and bring us back to the one fold. Was it not a great loving heart that could paint like this?

There are many other word-pictures of this divine artist, in which we may see the same thing here noticed,—the insertion of something not exactly needful for the story, but heightening the pictorial effect. If they pleased his taste, did he not know that they would please our taste, and

bring us nearer to that dear Soul of whom we have yet so much to learn?

It is because these parables are so lifelike that they have arrested the attention of unnumbered sculptors and painters. It seems an easier thing to make speaking groups, if only they copy him who was the first to outline them. The old churches and galleries of Europe are filled with imitations. Put together, they would make a mountain-pile. But not one of the myriads of artists has left a work which has so much entranced the world as that struck out by the Nazarene limner.

Did he dream how many painters would bend year after year over the scenes he portrayed? Dream of it? No such thought could have entered his mind. He threw his sketches off in an instant, on the spur of the occasion, and with a few touches made a group startling and imperishable forever. Did this exhaust his power?

A story is told of a president of a New England college, Dr. Wayland, who, talking with a student, heard him say that he did not think there was any special merit in the gospel para-

bles, and he believed that just as good might be made now, and even by himself. With gentleness and kindness the lad was asked to try his hand at the work, and to bring the result of his attempts. After writing many specimens, polishing and refining them, he read them to the president, who gave a few criticisms, and did not omit some encouraging words. But the parables were never known outside of that reading.

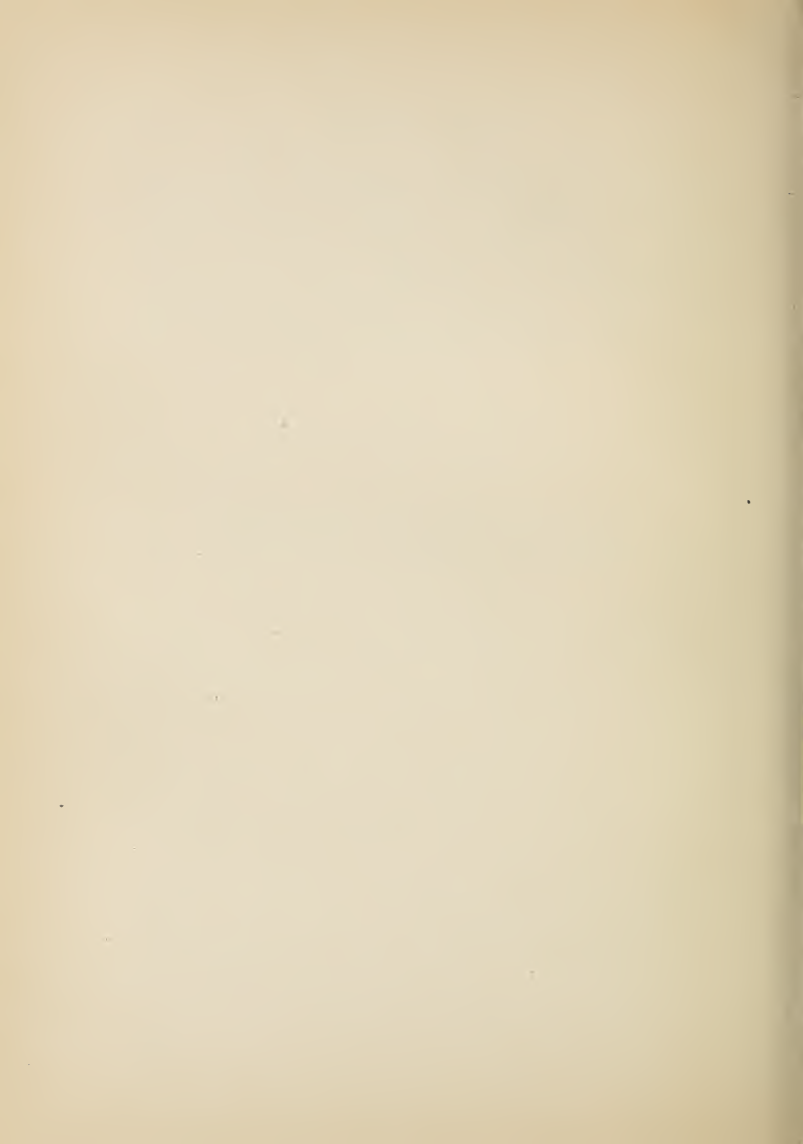
How the original word-pictures have endured ! Every generation has its brood of favorite artists, but in a few centuries their names are forgotten. The most renowned living masters of song have their little day. How many of them will be read by the great-grandchildren of their contemporaries ? Will the world ever let die the sketches of the good Samaritan and the prodigal son ?

What has given them such longevity ? It is their truth to nature,—human nature, the workings of its commonest but deepest elements, your heart and my heart, the heart not of any one tribe or people or age, but the heart of man as man, all the world over, and in all coming

time. How this great Soul loved the natural, and found his immortality in the grasp of nature ! His first hearers did not understand him. They were eager for the unnatural, and supernatural. When we come closer to the heart of nature, we shall come closer to the heart of this artist.



FACES THAT INSPIRE



## FACES THAT INSPIRE.

PERHAPS you have now and then met one of whom you have felt sure, by a certain refinement of features, by a clear and deep eye, by a calm, thoughtful self-poise, by a gentleness of mien, and a sweet, penetrating voice that here has been communion with divine things. You see it at a glance. It is an instantaneous flash. It carries profoundest conviction.

Such persons may have no official prefix to their names, neither honorable nor reverend. They may be the plain John or Mary of your acquaintance. Their whole life may have passed in obscurity. They may be clad in ordinary and quite unfashionable garments. They may live in no abodes of luxury. Their dwellings may be humble and cheaply furnished, perhaps scantily supplied with the common necessities.

But you do not notice these things. You notice only one thing. It is the face you have there seen. You cannot forget it. A picture by

Raphael or Fra Angelico, a whole life history, an unwritten but touching poem, seems reflected as in a mirror; and you feel that it has done you good. You would like to get a glimpse of it again.

As you look upon the past, you may recall such a face known years and years ago, so deep was its impress. It may have been that of some sweet companion of your childhood, taken up to a home for which it was early prepared. It may have been that of a departed sister or brother, whose last look told you of a heaven of which you did not doubt then, if you have questioned about it since. It may have been that of a nurse or servant who attended you in youth, whose simple and hearty faith gave a look you can never forget to your dying hour. It may have been that of a common laboring man, or of a lone woman struggling to bear up under an impoverished lot. Best of all, it may have been that of your mother whose prayer at your bedside opened to you the holiest vision you have ever had.

Whoever they were and however seen, you felt sure that they have solved some of life's mys-

teries; and a light not born here has encompassed their person.

We will not call this a mere human revelation. There is something divine in it. It makes credible the confession of Michel Angelo, who said, in one of his sonnets, "There is power in some faces to lift me at once to heaven." The original is much stronger,—"*Al ciel me spronar!*" Why should it not be so? Consider in what various ways God reveals himself to us. His glory he has impressed on the sun, his grandeur on the mountain, his sublimity on the ocean, his beauty on the landscape, his loveliness on the flower. Is there a better mirror and image of him than the human soul? And, when that rays out purity, peace, and blessedness, why should it not seem that God himself was there, and looked out upon us through the eye, which is a window of the soul? Such a face is better than any spoken words. It is itself a gospel.

Perhaps no one has an adequate idea of its capabilities to reveal heavenly things. Alas! in our civilization we have many illustrations of its power to reveal other things,—sometimes a bloated sensualism, sometimes a sharp eagerness

for selfish gain, sometimes an intense look outward and rarely inward, sometimes a hard indifference which has drawn a curl on the lip, sometimes a smirk of self-conceit, sometimes a lack of that reverence which comes only from communion with what is higher than ourselves. The sure sign of all this is there. Not Cain alone had the outward mark of what is within.

Do you not suppose that, if an exact likeness of the prominent men of our times was transmitted to future ages, those portraits, a thousand years hence, would tell the whole story of our prevailing type of character? What would then be thought of it? Perhaps those beholders would hardly recognize us as belonging to the same race as themselves. So much more self-forgetful, more reverential, more noble, human countenances may become.

Those living then may pity us whose lot fell, as they may think, in a dark and semi-barbarous age, — an age of money-making, of railroads, of machinery, of selfish struggles and social rivalries. How they might comment on our looks! See that intense eagerness and restless craving of the nineteenth-century men! They were, indeed,

somewhat above an animal condition ; but how poorly they must have known what it is to be *men*, and to have the beauty and the joy of true men ! All this they might say.

What is here supposed as a fact of a few thousand years to come seems to be rendered extremely probable by the fact of a few thousand years ago. If we had exact portraits of the men of the time of Homer, David, Solomon, and the old Sabines and Latins who founded Rome, it is not likely they would seem to belong to our human race. Here and there might be one who would look like a civilized and lovable being, just as among us there may be some who really belong to a future type. But, as to the majority, you could not call them your brethren. You would mark their low foreheads, their prominent jaws, their gluttonous lips, their animalized and brutal looks.

Why should not men become refined and elevated as much in the future as they have advanced in the past ? We have something more than conjecture to aid us. You know that busts of the old emperors are preserved in the Capitol in Rome. They were the leading men two

thousand years ago. No doubt, the artists of that day<sup>e</sup> softened down and idealized as much as they could, as all artists do, the lineaments of distinguished persons. But, as you walk through that gallery, you cannot help marking the gross, brutal features. With the exception of Marcus Aurelius, Antoninus Pius, and Julian, so called Apostate, whose noble features seem to discredit much ecclesiastical abuse, the most of them are repulsive through the predominance of animalism.

Thus through the human countenance the world may some time receive a higher and higher view of what has enduring reality and priceless worth. This is the power of that vision. Everything yields to it. Our position, our office, our wealth, sink down in its presence. There is no sermon, no book, no picture, no reproof of a friend, that touches us like that look. It tells us where has been found beneath all losses a greater gain, beneath all changes an undisturbed rest, beneath all sorrow a peace that the outside world knoweth not of.

I can therefore credit the story told of one who, walking the streets of a great city, reflecting



upon the troubles that had come thick upon him, desponding, hopeless, not knowing where he should turn or what he should do, and almost tempted to suicide, at length espied before him on the sidewalk, and approaching, a face which made him feel as if God was there looking upon him, grieving at his unrest, and telling him where peace and trust might be found.

A voice from heaven could not have touched him more. It filled him with a sense of his own emptiness. It inspired him with courage. It opened a new path. It proved a crisis in his life; and, as long as he lived, he thanked God for the lesson there taught.

And you, dear precious souls, whose countenances bear the winning expression here named, who have looked down beneath the shows and found the real substance, who see in obscurity, in want, in suffering, the school appointed for you, and have come out from every cloud into the bright sunlight of trust,—no, no, do not think you are not serving God in your hard lot.

Perhaps you are serving him in the best possible way. Your serene trust will shine out from your person. You cannot help it. You need

not think of it. It will speak and plead and win of itself. It will give its beauty to every line of your face, and its echo to every tone of your voice. And who may do more of the Father's will than you in the course of your life?

# JESUS AND THE REPORTERS



## JESUS AND THE REPORTERS.

IN rereading the other day Canon Farrar's "Life of Christ," the following question he proposes seemed eminently just. He asks, "Is it not allowable to make a distinction between facts and the mere conjectures and inferences of the spectators?"

In former times, when men believed in plenary inspiration and the infallibility of every word of Scripture, such discrimination was heresy. This was the shadow of that monstrous error. But many now think that the ignorance and prepossessions of the narrators unduly colored their record. If Jesus were to read the existing accounts of his life, would he not exclaim: "I did not mean what is here stated to be my view. These writers were filled with their former ideas. They were honest and in the main accurate, but their full comprehension of my statements was simply impossible; and how unjust to me to see no difference between their mind and my mind!"

An example may illustrate this injustice.

Every one then believed that sickness, leprosy, epileptic fits, deafness, blindness, in short, bodily sufferings of all kinds, were the work of evil spirits. This opinion was acquired in Babylon. The Jews brought it with them on their return from the captivity. It rested on no evidence. It was a pagan hypothesis. They were predisposed to see indications of such infernal action. They recognized proofs where proofs were purely imaginary. Their superstition would be of small interest to us if it did not implicate Jesus in their delusions.

Of course, we have no infallible mark distinguishing between their view and his view. The record mixes both. But a few significant hints can be put together. There may have been great wisdom in leaving the case to be settled by time. There is a *vis medicatrix naturæ* for errors as well as for diseases, and no change of creeds is worth much if it be not the fruit of maturer mental growth.

We have commonly a wholly unauthorized opinion as to the frequency of the reported healings. We are apt to think that, wherever the first disciples and their Master went, they were

occupied in relieving sickness and infirmities. This mistake arises in part from our having four separate biographies, which often repeat each other. We lump them together as one history. It is only a careful reader who sees how few the distinct cases are. The failures are not named. The insistency in detailing successes implies a disbelief somewhere. Is it wrong to think that a gently moulding mind had some influence to weaken the old superstitions?

This may seem more probable when we remember how seldom that mind dwelt on these outward occurrences. The allusions to them, the importance ascribed to them, are from the reporters, and not from him. This fact is obvious. Its meaning is significant. It suggests that he thought one thing about them, and that they thought another thing.

If placing his hand upon the sick and infirm was only a tender act of sympathy, is it strange that the disciples, in their wonder and reverence, believed that some mysterious virtue was imparted? This was then the common belief in Palestine. It is still the common belief there. Nor there alone. Has it not survived in other

places? Do none now think that the hands of a bishop convey a blessing transmitted from the apostles? Have we not read of thousands supposed to be healed by a touch from an ecclesiastical or regal chief? Until a few years was there not a liturgical "office of healing" in the English Church? In our commiseration for a recent and explicable error, can we not include those who lived two thousand years ago?

Our common translations of the Gospels lead us into error. They call that a "miracle" which in the original is called a "sign." The revised version continuously corrects this rendering. The word "miracle" has, in comparatively recent times, changed its meaning. Formerly denoting anything wonderful, we now understand by it a variation from the order of nature. Who will say that the sacred biographers had any general conception of an order of nature? Everything to them was a sign. The imagination suggested what the sign meant. After thirty years they gave an account of their life with their Master, and recalled some of these signs. Is it right to call them miracles? The substitution of a modern word having a different meaning is deceptive.



It was inevitable in the progress of Christian thought that even the first believers should after a while be lifted up to a higher level of ideas. The apostle John was the last of the Gospel writers; and he lived, we are told, to a great age. If we compare his record with the other three biographers, and look also to his Epistles, we see at a glance how seldom, and progressively seldom, he gives account of cures of body or of mind. Why should he do it? He was filled with other evidence. Far above any outward signs, he looked to the renewal of the heart. It was for him to say, "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself."

Saint Paul had a depth of conviction which did not need these signs. It would have been out of place for him to dwell upon stories of curing a fever or making the lame to walk. How petty these tales would have been to him who said, "Though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains, and have not love, I am nothing"! He also found the witness within.

They followed in the line of the Master's steps. Who can fathom the depth of his sorrow when he said, "Unless ye see signs and won-

ders, ye will not believe"? Could anything be a more significant rebuke? Can we doubt where with him was the true evidence?

Nor does this stand alone. Imagine the scene when the disciples, returning from some missionary labors, recounted their successes, adding that even "the spirits are subject unto us." But soon came not a welcome, but a reproof. "In this rejoice not that the spirits are subject unto you: but rather rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Why should they not rejoice in what was here first named, if Jesus believed that it was a proof of divine authority and of the manifest approval of God?

Other hints equally plain and direct may have fallen from his lips. Perhaps they were not understood or were forgotten. Do not these lift a name, which we all reverence, above alien and unworthy associations?

That he should be misunderstood by his contemporaries who undertook to report him is exactly what has happened in every country, in every generation, in every circle, where a superior intellect, the subject of much talk, has appeared among common men, — in all, perhaps

a thousand cases. The truths announced are at first only half comprehended, and are mixed up among the prepossessions of the day. Sometimes a bold assertion, a strange tone of the voice, an unusual look of the eye, a figure of speech, a gesture of the hand, have fired the imagination, and led to mistakes like those under review. These peculiarities struck the senses. It was more easy to ascribe influence to these than to look deeper.

It would be amusing to know how often notoriety has been achieved by trifles. The long and sad consequences of the case before us would have been more transient if they did not have other causes than the mistakes of the first reporters.

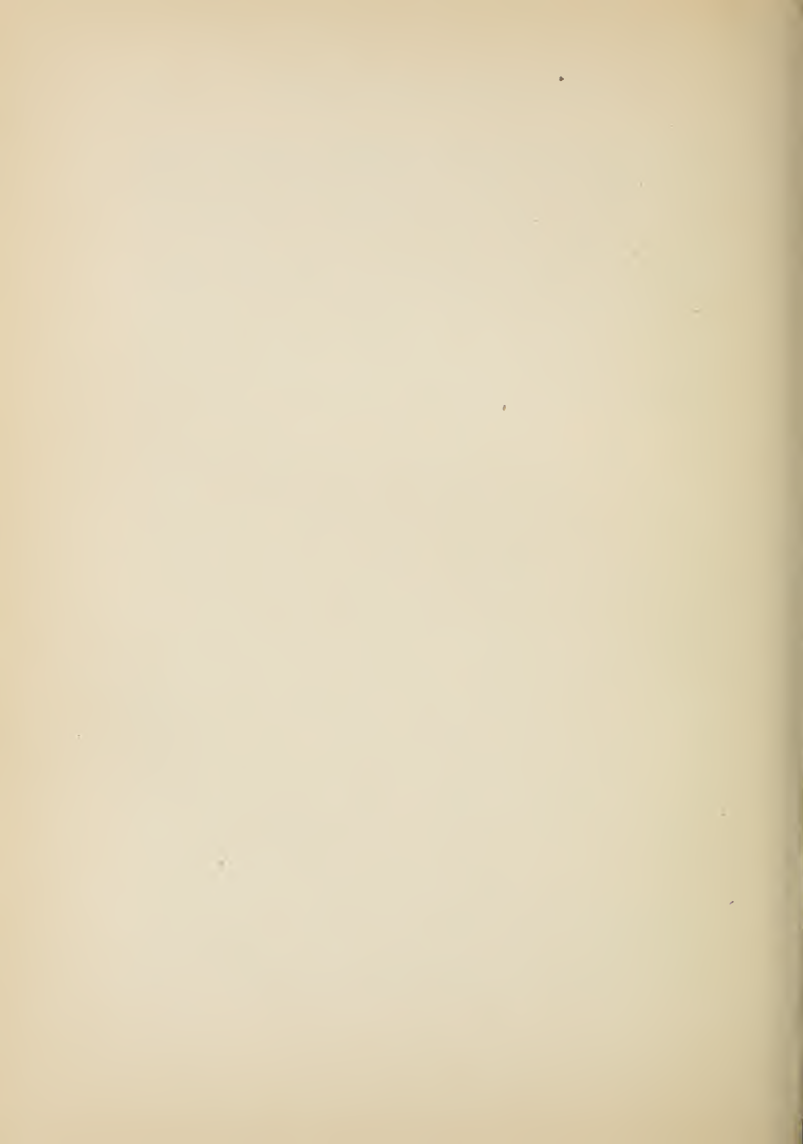
It is the duty of subsequent history to free the life of our great benefactor from its environment. Scores of errors about any one come more from what others say about him than from what he says of himself. We can understand Jesus only by eliminating him from the delusions of his hearers. The peculiar difficulty in his case is that for ages these mistakes have been believed to be as infallibly true as his own words. A

juster criticism will bring that great soul more intimately into the sphere of our consciousness and love.

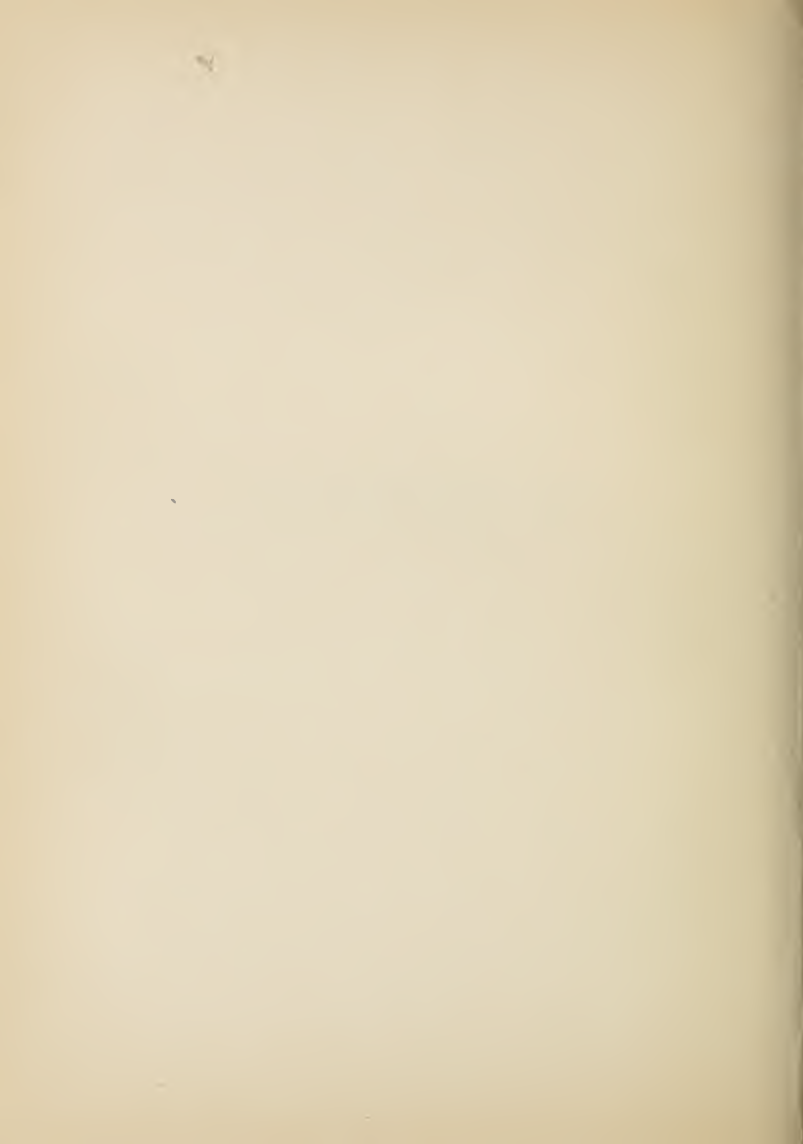
It would appear more reverent to that "Spirit of Truth" which, in the long run, has guided the developments of Christian thought, and which has the promise of leading "to all truth," if there had not been a perpetual opposition to a further understanding of the Scriptures. But here religious organizations have worked "after their kind." Their office is to keep doctrinal matters unchanged. The largest denomination in Christendom stands as the infallible guardian of ancient errors. Other great affiliations feel that their life-blood is found in unity of belief and resistance to all variation. They assemble delegates from countless local bands, that a great multitude, by outside show and pressure, by exciting harangues and contagious impulses, may be made to stand firm. This compulsion has of late been imitated by advocates for immediate political and reformatory action.

We have all seen how quickly this runs into intolerance. Trials for heresy are its legitimate fruit. The legal proceedings are much the same

as against perjurers and burglars. Penalties of excommunication and obloquy may for a while serve to keep the timid in fetters. But it is an offence to the freer spirit of our age; and there is something abroad which, for thoughtful Biblical criticism and for the true greatness of Jesus, is now eclipsing, quietly and steadily, all that was done in the sixteenth-century Reformation.



# THE CRUCIFIXION





## THE CRUCIFIXION.

ONE of the most faithful and trusted of the biographers of Jesus (Milman, in his "History of Christianity"), alluding to the crucifixion, says that the Roman soldiers gathered around it "the most savage and wanton insults."

It must be remembered that this is what lawyers call an *obiter dictum*,—an observation dropped by the way, without any pretence to a full review. If it be only an echo of traditional feelings, it is none the less to be regretted that it is not more discriminating. The facts deserve a careful scrutiny.

This kind of punishment passed, during centuries, through many changes. In the long run there was a gradual mitigation of its severity.

At first the naked body was impaled on a young tree, when its branches had been trimmed off and its top point had been sharpened. This point was thrust up through the person, entering the lowest part of the body. It was the execution which required the smallest preparation, and

was perfectly effectual. It was also the most horrible. The arms thrown out in all directions could bring no relief, and awakened compassion for the excessive agony.

There are repeated allusions in the Scriptures to this earliest mode, such as hung on a tree, the accursed tree. Classical phrases refer to the same fact, the *infelix arbor*.

The next step was to stretch out and bind the arms on a cross-timber, leaving the internal body un mutilated. Hence came the name of this punishment, the cross. Doubtless it gave momentary relief, though it may have delayed death.

Later a stupefying drink was offered to the victim. Some kind hand reached this to Jesus. One wonders why anæsthetics, after this hint, came so slowly into use. Subsequently, a shelf was provided as a seat or a rest for the feet. Finally, the presence of friends was allowed. They were not repulsed at the crucifixion of Jesus.

Is it not grateful to think that there was this growing tendency to compassion? Did any one then say that this was "unyoking all law"? Even brutal soldiers and their more brutal lead-

ers knew something of an evolution toward pity. Who needs now despair of progress anywhere? The death of Jesus took place in some stage of this advancement, not surely in the first. But no one can exactly say how.

The popular impression that he was *nailed* to the cross is wholly unauthorized. He was bound to it, but who can say that he was there nailed? That barbarous and bloody method may have been common in earlier times, when there was no thought but to have life taken with despatch. There is not a word said about *nails* by either of the evangelists. The only place in the history where that word is found is in the interview with the incredulous Thomas. That theatrical passage, found only in one Gospel, is supposed to be a marginal anecdote accidentally inserted into the canon. Biblical scholars tell us that we are by no means sure that we read the original Bible when we read that story.

Ghastly pictures of the bleeding hands and feet were subsequently very common, and still are. They were devised to affect the imagination and sensibilities. After the myth of the finding of the cross, in the fourth century, the possession

of one of the nails was coveted. A wonderful power was imputed to them. A long list might be made of the churches, monasteries, convents, cathedrals, chapels, and of superstitious old persons, who purchased at great price one of the nails,—in all, perhaps enough to build a house.

Of all persons present at the crucifixion, it is evident who was most calm and self-possessed. His prayer that the cup might pass from him was not offered in the moment of execution, but in its anticipation. How true to nature! The hour brings its support, but the soul shrinks at the forethought. There can be no just doubt that the words, "My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" were a quotation from the twenty-second Psalm, affirming not his distrust, but his unshaken reliance. He repeated only the first line, all perhaps he had strength to utter, with a view of calling to mind the whole Psalm, peculiarly applicable to himself. This brief mode of citation is still common with us.

As to the degree of his sufferings, we have some hints of a trustworthy kind. He could not have received much bodily injury. If the post-resurrection account be true, it appears that he

started the day after he left the tomb — Saint Luke says it was the same day — for a walk of seven or eight miles to Emmaus. What indignities he had suffered were more of ridicule than of physical maltreatment. In that age and long afterward those condemned to death were regarded as outlaws, and were generally exposed to insult and outrage.

Probably there was here but little of this compared with other cases. Some restraining influence overawed the scene. There was no mob violence. Even by-standers smote their breast with grief. Only four Roman soldiers took part in the transaction. A Roman centurion who was present exclaimed, "Truly, this was a son of God." He could discern real greatness, while the unappreciative and cowardly disciples took to flight.

Crucifixion has been named as peculiarly a Roman barbarity. But it is well known that it had been inflicted in many Eastern countries long before it was adopted by Rome. We need not go back to primitive savage times to see what a great advance it was upon former methods of execution. Sometimes criminals were pre-

cipitated from high rocky cliffs, and their broken, mangled bodies were left to be devoured by dogs and wolves. Sometimes they were cast into dens of wild beasts. Sometimes they were helplessly fastened in lone desert places, where their flesh was gnawed by hyenas and their eyes were picked out by ravens. Sometimes they were immured in dark and damp stone cages, amid serpents and vermin, until they starved. Burning to death over a slow fire was the punishment often decreed for heretics. The sufferer on Calvary had a better doom under the order, decency, and carefully established rules characteristic of Roman power.

It seems fair to remember, also, the state of mind generally produced by long-continued scenes of violence and murder. This was the then condition of Judea. Such times have an indurating effect. Life which is less secure has less value. It is relinquished with a bravery which at other times seems impossible. This is the merciful compensation. Every public man knew that he was in hourly peril. He was to some degree prepared for it. The victim to whom our thoughts now turn was entirely con-

scious of his precarious position. We see how frequently he referred to it. It was neither with the indifference of a Stoic nor with the sensitiveness that went beyond self-command.

There is no need of exaggerating the necessities of his condition by imputing to him the feelings of our day. He had the best thing for him and for us. It was the victory of long habits of self-discipline. All this takes him out of the theological haze of a vague, unintelligible demi-god ; and we see one, beloved of the Father, tempted in all points like ourselves, coming to our sides, and filling our hearts with his heavenly wisdom and divine courage.

In the famous Florentine Gallery there is a painting, by Michel Angelo, of the mother of Jesus, standing at the cross. While the other women veil their heads amid their sobs and screams, she looks intently upon her son, with unblanched face and with the calmness of perfect trust. The picture seems to tell us that she had no doubt it was all right. She had believed what he had said to her. It would come out just as he had foretold. The event was worth all it cost. The whole world would in time be

blessed by it. It was woman's faith and love that inspired that attitude and look. And if Art has here rightly interpreted her, and all this was true of that mother's feeling, it was more noble than anything else ascribed to her. Perhaps it may suggest an inspiring lesson to us.



THE BODILY RESURRECTION  
OF JESUS



## THE BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS.

IN reading any of the books in the vast library on this subject, every one must have wished for a dispassionate and trustworthy guide who had lived through the related scenes.

We need some one besides the well-known reporters. It is evident that their minds were disturbed by hopes and fears. They give fragmentary and incoherent accounts. The vain attempt has often been made to adjust them to an indubitable history. A traditional explanation has been formulated into creeds, but these rest upon the impressions of bewildered and frightened men.

It is not a little surprising that, while we are so often directed to them, we are less frequently referred to Jesus himself. Can we have a better interpreter than he? No one was more self-possessed. No one knew so well all that had

taken place. No one was more free from every undue bias. Whose words may we trust if not his? A transcript of his mind must settle all questions. And such a transcript we may find if we dismiss the old beliefs about the infallibility of a record made by men far inferior to him.

Two pivotal questions are worthy of careful study. Does it appear that he had, before his crucifixion, any anticipation that he was to return from the tomb? Does it appear that he had, after his affirmed bodily resurrection, any consciousness that he had died?

On this first point all will recall his repeated affirmations that his crucifixion would terminate his earthly career: "I go to the Father, and ye shall see me no more." "I go to Him who sent me." "Now I am no more with you." "I leave the world, and go to my Father."

Is it easy to find language more plain and decisive? Does it exclude the idea of any further life on earth?

These words do not stand alone. He had hours of the tenderest affection. The heart then overflows. It will have irrepressible utter-

ance. Can we detect a struggle to keep anything back?

When he comforted his friends who were overwhelmed at the thought of a departure which they believed was final, could he have refused one hint that in a few hours he would meet them, victorious and rejoicing? Might not the anguish of Gethsemane have been mitigated by the thought that, after a brief sleep, he would awake triumphant? When his mother stood at the cross, why not a word to her of the infinite consolation which one syllable might have given? When, in his solemn prayer, he said, "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do," how could he have said this if he knew that the crowning part of that work, according to the popular theology, had not then been done?

The moral consistency of his words and of his entire conduct will be obvious. If it be thought that he might have masked his emotions, into what do we convert the most transparent character ever known in history?

It is sometimes claimed that he must have foreseen his bodily resurrection, as the disciples repeatedly declared that they had received from

him the words that he would rise again "on the third day." This is the chief element of contradiction in the narrative. Whom shall we believe, him who affirmed that the cross was the end of earth, or those who, "stunned and confounded," as Milman says, felt that not only their personal safety, but the existence of the religion, were dependent upon their leader's continued and visible life?

It is no reflection upon their character, it is what was perhaps unavoidable, that this hint of a rising should later—for it was not understood before, was entirely an after-thought—have peculiar prominence with them, should subsequently be often quoted, and perhaps too frequently be ascribed to Jesus, if only through their mortification at their own blindness.

Every careful reader of the Scriptures knows that the expressions "the third day," "after three days," were of old often used loosely, like the word "several" with us, denoting not a specific, but a short time. The reporters clung to the literal sense. The phrase "rising from the dead" was imbedded in the Hebrew language long before the Christian era. It did not then

appear for the first time. It was not a new truth, having the necessity sometimes claimed for it. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob rose from the dead; and this was thought to be true of Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, and John the Baptist. It was believed that some of them were seen again on earth. Their influence reappeared. If Jesus foresaw a mighty reaction of his spirit,—“And I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men to me,”—soon beginning after his disappearance, this may have been all that the indefinite phrase “three days” really meant. With him it probably had not the slightest allusion to a bodily reappearance. The mistake of the reporters, while it relieves all appearance of contradiction, is explicable, if unfounded. But how could they think of the legacy which, aided by the subsequent theory of a verbal infallibility, they bequeathed to the ages?

A few words only on the second question,—Did Jesus have a consciousness of having left the tomb?

Every reader of the Gospels must have noticed that we look in vain for even the slightest allusion to what it is supposed he had experienced.

Did he retain a memory of all the past? Were his last mortal struggles attended by any anguish? Was the benumbing bodily function like falling insensibly asleep? With the relaxation of the ties of flesh was there a higher spiritual joy? Did he at first use the old bodily faculties, or were these transfigured and made less earthly? Did the thought of a new career come gradually or suddenly and rapturously to his mind? Had he any gladness at again meeting his mother and all those once so dearly loved?

At any rate, he has not one word to say about the great mystery of death. Jesus before the crucifixion and Jesus after the crucifixion do not seem to be the same person. Where are the effusive, inspiring lessons that filled every day of the former period? In the latter period we enter into a region of shadows. Is there any illuminating light reflected from the alleged experience?

One thing appears very clear. Those who wrote the last portion had no Master to follow, no superior wisdom to guide. They were left to their own understanding. Nor is there a higher demonstration who was the light, the wis-



dom, the joy, of their life, when we see this lapse to the level of the disciples' mind the moment that he was withdrawn.

It is sometimes asked, What is the value of the testimony of those who said that they had seen Jesus after he had left the sepulchre? The sincere but simple-minded men knew nothing of the fact that powerful emotions sometimes affect the sight in a way as vivid as do outward and palpable objects. Only in modern times has this psychological truth been established. It was unknown of old. It is not fully known even now, in all its conditions and limitations.

But it has been undeniably demonstrated in judicial investigations, where a person much talked of is mistakenly seen in his familiar walk or chair. How often have bereaved affections seen the departed so manifestly that one can hardly persuade them of an error! A greatly beloved benefactor, because men feel he could not possibly die, has, as was supposed, long survived the last struggle with life; and his dear image has floated before human vision.

All this has happened in ten thousand cases. Why not be just to the sacred writers, and allow

to them the explanation so often accorded to others? Their conduct at least proves how overmastering was their love.

How was it that the bodily resurrection of Jesus came to be the prominent and peculiar part of the Christian faith.

No space can here be given to well-known historical details. What potent motives urged to this belief? Here were condensed all disputes about religion. An admission settled everything. It was the first point to be presented. It was preached continually. Nothing so much excited curiosity and wonder. It called forth passionate rhetoric. The old Church Fathers wrote voluminously in its defence. In time, Art, with picturesque power, came to its aid. The Passion Plays gave it distinctness and permanence. Poetry hallowed it in verse. The millenarian craze taught that armies of saints would rise from their graves to fight the battles of the Lord.

This was followed by the madness of the Crusades, identifying thoughts of a bodily resurrection with the sepulchre for which all Christendom fought. The Protestant Reformation

effected little change in creeds. And afterward, with less rude and warlike souls, what tender and holy feelings were gathered around that deserted tomb!

Still, it must not be forgotten that, in later Christian generations, feelings equally tender and holy have failed to see in a far-off, uncertain event the best proof of a future life, and have found an anchor sure and steadfast in other evidence. The course of a devout Christian experience leads to this result. It develops tastes and aspirations which welcome and confirm the hope of a continued life. It sees how inconsiderable are the greatest attainments in wisdom and virtue, compared with the possibilities of our nature. Are all these waste? We should not call him a wise builder of a house who raised its walls a few inches above its foundation, and then left it as the completion of his design.

As we approach the transition that awaits all, there may be little reference with many to the old Biblical interpretations. It would give birth to doubts alien to the then solemn earnestness. We fall back upon what we were made to be, —

upon convictions and longings which we cannot wholly suppress, which grow stronger the more we heed them, and are as surely a part of our personal equipment as our logic and demonstrations. And in time a breath from above meets us, as Columbus knew, by a fragrant breeze, that he was approaching a new world.

# HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS



## HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS.

WE read of beautiful friendships in ancient poetry; but, it may be asked, where do we find them now? A cold individualism has supplanted the self-forgetful enthusiasm of earlier days, and so friendship is one of the lost arts.

Is this exactly true? Who can tell us if the wide fame of those old ties was not, in great part, because they were so rare? Certainly, the more kindly and disinterested elements of human character have, in modern times, a wider development. Probably there are thousands of neighborhoods which might furnish examples of fervent, self-sacrificing friendships; but they could not be set off by contrasts once very common.

Our altered state of society does not require the kind of friend greatly needed of old. In ruder ages, amid the uncertainties of order, the convulsions of empire, the overthrow of dynasties, the perils of tyranny, lawlessness, and ruffianism, how anxiously men looked out for a helper and protector! Not that there was a selfish feeling

at the bottom, — for who can believe that a selfish feeling ever begot a pure friendship? — but a sense of common danger brought men closer together, and made it more necessary to understand their mutual needs. The existing difference of condition is no proof that they have now less heart. It is more a proof of public safety.

Remark, again, how much modern life is spread over a large surface. The morning newspaper tells us what is going on in the city, throughout the State, throughout the Union, and in some degree throughout the world. Life so diffused is not concentrated as in past ages.

As you sail on the Rhine and see the ruins of the old castles that cap every mountain peak, you think of the baronial lords that once inhabited them, whose next-door neighbor was distant on another frowning eminence, from whom little was heard, perhaps, from one month to another. They knew not a thing of what was going on in all the world besides.

If you go still farther back in history, you find that the circle in which men had sympathy for each other was smaller and smaller the farther you ascend the stream of time. Each individual



became more isolated. He was terribly hated, if he was not liked; but, if he was loved, it was with a concentrated interest, not diffused, as now, over a multitude.

But, after making these allowances, what follows? That human hearts have not now as much capacity as formerly for friendship, that we do not need a friend to double all our satisfactions, to correct our one-sidedness, to show us our failings, and to be to us what it was to one who said that to this he owed all the success of his life? Everybody knows what the right answer is.

The question then comes up, How may we obtain that boon and blessing? And here the most frequent mistake is made. Some seem to think that they can pick out a friend as they would pick out a house or a farm they seek. Accordingly, they fix upon a person in the position of life with which they can sympathize, having the age, the appearance, the manners, the culture, the social standing, they fancy; and then they say, Be my friend.

Have you not heard of such attempts? Have they not often been repeated? And do you not

know the uniform result? They have failed, will fail, must fail, ought to fail, because they have begun in a wrong way.

If you had nothing to consult but your tastes and character, the plan might work very well. The house or the farm you would purchase has no will of its own. It all goes with the title-deeds. But this is not the case with him whom you would choose for a friend. His tastes, sympathies, and culture are to be consulted. You may fancy him, but he may not fancy you. To win his consent, the first thing necessary is to deserve it. If he be the wise and noble guide you want, how quickly he will be repulsed if you are unlike him! The way, then, to get a friend is to look into your own heart, and enthrone there the qualities which will draw him as surely as the magnet draws the steel.

You have heard people say, Such a one gets along very well, because he has pushing friends; but I never had such to stand by me and help me. And perhaps you have rightly felt like replying, You never will have them, never can have them, because you look to the advantage they may give you. You have not learned the

very alphabet of friendship, which is to acquire, first of all, the qualities that will insure it.

Not more readily do we go to the rose, wherever blooming, to inhale its sweetness, than the flower of our nature, seen in any by-corner of life, will attract our steps and our heart. Be disinterested, and generous souls will be around you. Be kindly and obliging, and you will be in touch with all kindred dispositions. Cherish a warm and effusive heart, and like hearts will rejoice to bask in your rays.

It is related that in a dingy neighborhood in London lived one, not the possessor of wealth nor a branch of an eminent pedigree,—the two things so much thought of in that city,—before whose door were seen the carriages and livery of high, aristocratic families. Some outside observer asked : What is the secret that attracts them there? They represent a circle I would give anything to enter, but I have tried in vain to be a member of it.

The only secret was character. She who lived there had the magnetism of a wise and noble life, with a charm of conversation and a sweet soul that beamed out from her eye and her

manners. While some could not gain admission to her company, there were others who were happy to belong to her retinue. Doors, bolts, and bars could not more effectually divide the two classes.

The case shows that something more is needed than the mere possession of amiable qualities. These must be apparent. It is of little worth that the pebble in your garden encloses a diamond, if no one knows it is there. A striking Biblical proverb teaches that he who would have and keep friends "must show himself friendly." The proofs of an unselfish and loving heart are irresistible. It was unjustly said that every Englishman is not only an islander, but is himself an island. If not so widely applicable, this is true of many not English. Through a reluctance to give others an inspection of themselves, through a habit of reticence and concealment, perhaps through a chronic bashfulness and timidity, they live shut up. They are like burrs that have prickly points you would not clasp. They are like hard shells that contain a savory meat, if you can get at it.

We sometimes hear it said of a third person

that you must be long acquainted with him in order to know his value. This means that you must break through the ice before you can find the refreshing water. In the case of others you drink at the open fountain. It is the frank character that attracts. In looking back over one's life, we see how many have prospered chiefly through this single trait. Far more than on learning, more than on wit, more than on eloquence, more than on wealth or elevated social position, successes have been showered on hearts that are open as the day, and admit the warm sunlight to shine within and around. What is the secret of this transparency, if it be not a habit of self-forgetfulness and cordial good will to all?

Who has not often observed what enduring friendships spring from ability to see something noble in each other's hearts? Of course, there have been temporary alliances, partnerships, confederacies, dominated and for a while compacted by selfish motives. But they never can be durable. There is somewhere a centrifugal force, and ere long they fly asunder. And, when parted, there is no hate like that of those who

feel that they have been deceived. Permanence belongs only to friendships founded on the higher qualities of our nature ; and, such ties enduring through a long life, surviving changes of fortune, sickness, and the infirmities of years, do they give hint of ceasing with the mortal breath ?

How suddenly friendship may spring up when we do get a quick and deep insight into hearts ! Soldiers in the havoc of battle, the shipwrecked clinging on a raft at sea, some unexpected and decisive crisis in a man's life, when a word, a look, a gesture, may disclose the inmost depths of the soul, and show as if by a lightning-flash something noble and heroic,—such moments have done the work of years, and have bound together hearts that have had this instantaneous communion. It is character that is clasped.

This is true in another case of equal interest, where friendships have grown up gradually, after much painstaking to understand each other's hearts. Such ties come not suddenly, as in the former way, but by the careful scrutiny of years. Intimacy with a few persons is far more favorable to this result than mingling in a wide social circle. One might suppose that in a large city,

where are daily met thousands of people of great variety of taste and culture, a friend might be found more easily than in a small rural neighborhood, where perhaps not a half-dozen persons are fully acquainted with each other.

But the fact is not so. In a large general society the talk is apt to be superficial and repetitious, each one adapting himself to a conventional type and reiterating commonplace things. The deepest, strongest, most enduring friendships have usually grown up in small circles that invited close mutual study and careful mutual adaptation. Here also it is character that is clasped.

Why do we so value our bosom friends, why look so deeply into their souls, why this admiration for what is true, disinterested, and noble, why the fact that all ties that are enduring must be based on elevated character? Is there no suggestion in all this? Are not our friendships like stepping-stones across the current of life? May they not be finally like wings by which we may soar?





SOME OF THE LAWS OF  
MEMORY



## SOME OF THE LAWS OF MEMORY.

THOUGH seldom named, they are peculiarly striking, and reveal a special and studied intention for human happiness. If we could see our faculty of memory, could handle and examine it as we would a machine, we might call it the most wonderful invention in the world. For what are springs and wheels of steel and brass, compared with the finer contrivances of perception, discrimination, retentiveness, running on, perhaps, for a hundred years, without any friction and without any thought from us? The outer engine you must scour and lubricate: the inner engine takes care of itself.

One of the surprising facts of this faculty is the vastness of its collections. If its impressions may be compared to photographic plates, how many of them lie in a space invisible to your eye! In the case of one well informed in history, what a multitude of events and dates,—conspiracies, wars, revolutions, battles, victories, defeats, names of kings, generals, orators, states-

men, diplomatists, accounts of inventions, discoveries, arts, improvements, all packed away where no one can see them, and yet all so orderly arranged that they can be taken up merely by a thought!

It is indeed a miracle. But you need not go to the historian to see it. You may find it in your own mind. How many thousand facts have you there collected,— pictures of your childhood and youth, your pleasures, your hopes, your fears, your loves, your hates; and then, in maturer years, your plans, your toils, your bargains, your journeys, your disappointments, your successes, the incidents that have filled every year and every day of your life!

Some perhaps are only dimly seen; but what a multitude would start into bold relief, were they all written out! And they are all engraved, distinct, enduring, ineffaceable, in the mysterious scripts within. Full of wonders does all nature seem in its designs, forces, and phenomena; but we carry the greatest wonder in ourselves.

It is another marvellous fact that we remember our pleasures more vividly than our physical pains. We see this in our recollections of child-

hood. What a happy period to look back upon ! Yet we had many sufferings which seemed great at the time. We fell out of our chair, we tumbled down in our walk, we had the tooth-ache, we cut our finger, we were laid up in sickness, we were forbidden to join in favorite plays. Hardly a week passed in which we did not cry as if our little hearts would break.

Do we remember one of those pains now ? You recall the fact that you did have them ; but the sensation is blotted out forever, and by no effort of imagination can you bring it back. But are your childhood's pleasures extinguished ? Do you not have something more than the bare recollection that you were then happy ? The sensation itself of your early joys,—will it not come again ?

We all know the answer. The places where we played, the companionship of loving mates, the sight of the room in which we slept when a child, the doll which was petted, the hobby-horse which was straddled, the lawn where we looked up to the stars, the garden where we gathered flowers,—have not all these a story to tell of something imperishably sweet ?

What is true of our childhood is true of all our life. Our memory is like a sieve, which lets all our wretched moments pass through and away, while other moments it keeps and holds fast. It would have been a terrible infliction, had the fact been the other way. Who could endure existence if every twinge of anguish lived as sharp as in its first experience? What an insupportable load would have accumulated in a few years! No one in old age could have endured it. It would crush him. How obvious here the work of a divine intention!

There is a still more curious fact relating to this subject. If in our remembrance of a past trial there be connected with it some luminous point, something which now explains it, lifts it up, gives it a cheerful hue, how instinctively the memory seizes hold of that point, dwells upon it, and makes the most of it! In time it may become the only thing you remember at all. Here is a common and very suggestive fact. Let us look at its verification.

A dozen years ago you met with a disappointment, which at first seemed without remedy. In the end, however, it turned out to your advan-

tage. It is the pleasure of that turn which lives fresh in your recollection. How often you mentally go back to it, and retouch it with new colors if it begins to fade !

Something once happened to you and your family which then seemed insupportable. But there was an odd circumstance that attended it. It afterwards struck you with surprise. Perhaps by the alternate play of grief and laughter, it now moves you with joy, in spite of all its first gloom. It is that circumstance which will live forever in your recollection. You recall it a thousand times. You tell it to your friends. The former tears of sorrow now give place to tears of mirth. What an electric power has been given to memory to single out from the past gloom a ray of light and joy ! Here, again, how obvious is the kind intention !

Do impressions made upon the memory ever become entirely obliterated ? Persons recovered from drowning have said that they saw all the events of their lives flash before them in the last moment of consciousness. This is an indefinite statement, and much cannot have been included in a sudden alarm. There are facts which imply

a far more deliberate and comprehensive and indelible survey of the past. On revisiting the scenes of former days, on meeting a friend from whom we have been separated, perhaps, for half a century, on reperusing a book not read for many years, memory draws out, with full self-possession, the negative of photographic plates, distinct as at first. Is this the book of remembrance one day to be opened?

And here comes another law of memory, more serious than any yet noticed. The pleasure from one wrong act is likely to be very short, if there be really any pleasure in it at all. But the rebuking memory may be felt you know not how long nor how many years hence.

Even here is seen the crowning proof of the supreme goodness. Sins have their sting taken out of them by the transforming power of forgiveness. He to whom much is forgiven loveth much. The earthly parental relation and some of the most affecting parables explain what is confirmed by wide human experience.

Where is the theology that has here been true? Theology has dealt more with the terrors of the law. To frighten anxious souls, it has had



enough to say about the safety of the one apostolic Church, about the needed absolution of the priest, about the grandeur of an ancient and stately hierarchy, about imputation and substitution, and blood that cleanses guilt, and election to salvation made by a party vote. These are outside plasters, which do not touch the secret springs of action nor remove the hidden sources of wrong-doing.

Their manifest inefficacy is one of the causes of the general decline of religion,—not as an outward institution, but as an inward power. It is to the credit of humanity if it feels that the one thing needful is a sincere and persevering resolve to a life right in that eye which sees through the human soul. No doubt there are countless subtle delusions encompassing this subject ; but this does not prove that there is no real and solid thing of this kind, lifting man to a higher plane, putting him in a new relation to the Author of his being, and enthroning his love for God and God's love for him.



HUMAN LOVE FOR GOD



## HUMAN LOVE FOR GOD.

IT may be thought that there is an impassable distance between what is implied in the last word of this title and what is implied in its first word. Hardly do we at first climb up to any clear idea of God. How, then, can we at once reach him by our love?

It is not easy to see how we can love one whose existence is not put beyond all doubt, of whose personality we only dimly conceive, with whom we have no visible communication except through intermediate agencies, and whose infinite grandeur, if really felt, must annihilate us.

Even when these and other conditions are met, we do not readily yield our affections to one who imperatively says, "Thou shalt love me." Love follows some other law than that of authority.

There may be those who say it is impossible for man to love God. A larger number may blame themselves for their coldness of heart. It may not be useless to try to show what love for

God really means, and how it is within the sphere of our capabilities and duty.

When we talk about the distance between God and man, there may be a survival of the childish conception that God is a venerable and omnipotent Ruler, seated on a far-off throne, surrounded by myriads of angels, and superintending this wonderful universe.

Perhaps there may be shadows from an earlier perspective. During long ages it has been believed that nature is something not yet subdued to God's dominion, that it is at war with him, that it is the realm of demons sending to us our disappointments and sufferings. Science has banished the evil spirits ; but, if we have inherited the influence of this ancient superstition, we may account for the way in which many still speak of nature. Anything that is according to nature is at once pushed aside, as unworthy of further thought. It makes no appeal to our wonder and reverence. A wall is built up between nature and God.

Here comes the supposed distance. Modern thought rejects this remoteness. God is imminent in nature. He moves the planets in their

orbits, and paints the tints of the humblest flower. Thus he is omnipresent. "Whither shall I go from thy spirit? Whither shall I flee from thy presence?" This is the religion of our era, leading us out of the misconceptions of the past, and bringing us nearer to Him "in whom we live and move and have our being." That the ancient writers here quoted had foregleams of the grandest spiritual truth is a better proof of their divine insight than all the arguments of Biblical critics. The early religions could not have been altogether ridiculous and debasing things if they were here and there illuminated by such lofty and prophetic minds.

Are perplexities about God's personality any greater than perplexities about our own personality? Who has ever seen his own soul? If we ask in vain, What is its form? the inquiry is also fruitless, Or what is its essential quality?

Who has even seen his dearest friend? It is only his outward person that is visible. His spirit is as much a mystery as is the spirit of God. Our friend's soul acts through his kind deeds and his loving and noble life. And is not God seen by his works, by every adjustment

for our good, by every happy hour we enjoy, even by the evils we meet, designed as parts of a needed discipline?

But the darkness which clouds the personality of our dearest friend is not sufficient to lead us to think we can never love him, or to prevent our grateful thought upon the tokens of his care and affection. Why should it be sufficient in the case of God?

Here is not an exceptional fact. In all outward objects there is something too deep for us to fathom. As to matter itself, we can see only as far as it affects our senses. What is it in itself, do we know? So with light, electricity, life, body receiving action from mind, planets distant myriads of miles wheeled in their orbits, a flower emitting its fragrance, and countless other cases, we observe only effects, but not the distinctive agency itself. We are perpetually put to school to teach us the limits of our knowledge. But do those limits lead us to deny the existence of something back of the phenomena?

If "an undevout astronomer is mad," what less can be said of an undevout geologist, an undevout botanist, an undevout historian of the



progress of our race through cycles of a thousand years? Study in any one line of investigation brings us nearer to the order, wisdom, and benignity of God; and doubt and denial flourish best where there has been no study at all.

Not that profound study is the only pathway to faith. The common appearances of the world are surely, if with less emphasis, here a guide. The inward and the outward are co-ordinated in one symphony, evincing a unity of intention between God in nature and God in a healthy human soul.

Convictions which are the fruit of a pure and thoughtful life show that there is something in us which responds to God, and something in God which responds to us. It is because he lives in us, and we live in him. In the possible growth of likeness we may become one,—a bold figure of speech, which we should not dare to use without leave. Even in souls who, as has been said, would be crushed by the grandeur of God, there are intimations of something infinite. How unmeaning to them the thought of a remote and distant God!

If any one be troubled by the command to love

God, it may be well to try to form some just idea of the mode in which it was given.

No one supposes that distinct words were uttered. God has not linguistic organs. He has no need of any of man's thousand dialects. The phrases "God said" and "The Lord spake these words" were used by those who believed that God impressed upon their mind the things reported. But they were free to utter them in their own way. "The spirit of the prophet was subject to the prophet," not he to it. A duty he set forth by the words "Thou shalt"; a restraint, by the words "Thou shalt not." It does not follow that this was the diction which God himself used. The diction was according to the custom of that age.

It was laid aside in advanced stages of culture. Who can imagine Jesus as saying, "Thou shalt be pure in heart," "Thou shalt be meek and merciful"? He never taught in that style. But, looking to the commandment which first appeared as early as the Book of Deuteronomy, it is, indeed, a wonderful fact that some even then subordinated all ceremonies, rites, sacrificial gifts, and creeds to the one great command-

ment. It required a long time to make this doctrine acceptable to many, even after its indorsement by him who said there is "none greater than this." The doctrine is one thing, its form of statement in Deuteronomy is another thing; and the form partook of the rudeness of an early people.

Not only the words of the commandment, but their real meaning, should be noted. The word "love" is a translation from a Hebrew term which places the stress on other things than mere affections. It includes reverence, aspiration, obedience, a steadfast looking to God, a humble and sincere breathing for him. This last appears to be the root idea. All these various shades of meaning were covered by the word "love."

A like fact is found in our language. We say that we should love our child, should love a flower, should love our country, should love a wise and beneficent ruler. Because we include all these in one term, it does not follow that there must be no discrimination. Love is graduated according to the object. Who can suppose that we are required to love God with the vivacity and tenderness felt for our closest

friend? The affection the Bible enjoins is an habitual reverence, wanting perhaps, as some may think, in occasional fervor, but really more enduring, more obedient to reason, and with more control over the life.

There is also something noteworthy in the words "with all thy heart and mind and strength." They suggest that there was of old a division of our capacities, not unlike what we make to-day, when we speak of our affections, our reason, and our will. It was a sensible remark of the renowned Church Father, Saint Augustine, who said that true religion has a claim upon our whole nature, not on our love alone, but upon our understanding and our force of character. Nothing can be more true. And it follows that to bring the chief stress to bear on our emotions is to obey only a part of our duty, and what all history proves is the easiest part.

Some who may regard all this explanation as unneeded may turn with more interest to another question. Taking the word "love" in its broad, Scriptural sense, why does God ask for it? Not for his glory, but to enrich and ennoble our nature.

Yet the former statement is often supposed to be the pivot on which our whole duty turns. What a low mental level it implies, if we think that our adoration, thanksgiving, and praise have for their chief object to exalt God! Even the sainted Dr. Watts, in a hymn long a favorite in the churches, thus sings:—

“We’ll crowd thy gates with thankful songs,  
High as the heavens our voices raise;  
And earth with her ten thousand tongues  
Shall fill thy courts with sounding praise.”

The picture is drawn from the homage which subjects pay to their monarch. It suggests the key-note to much of our devotional poetry, our prayers and litanies. What can the Ruler of the universe think of our praise? One act of kindness, from a pure and merciful motive, to the humblest suffering fellow-being,—is it not a thousand-fold better? “Something greater than the temple is here,” said one who had no reference in these words to himself, as the revised version correctly suggests, but alluded, it may be, to compassion for those in need,—some *thing*, not some *one*.

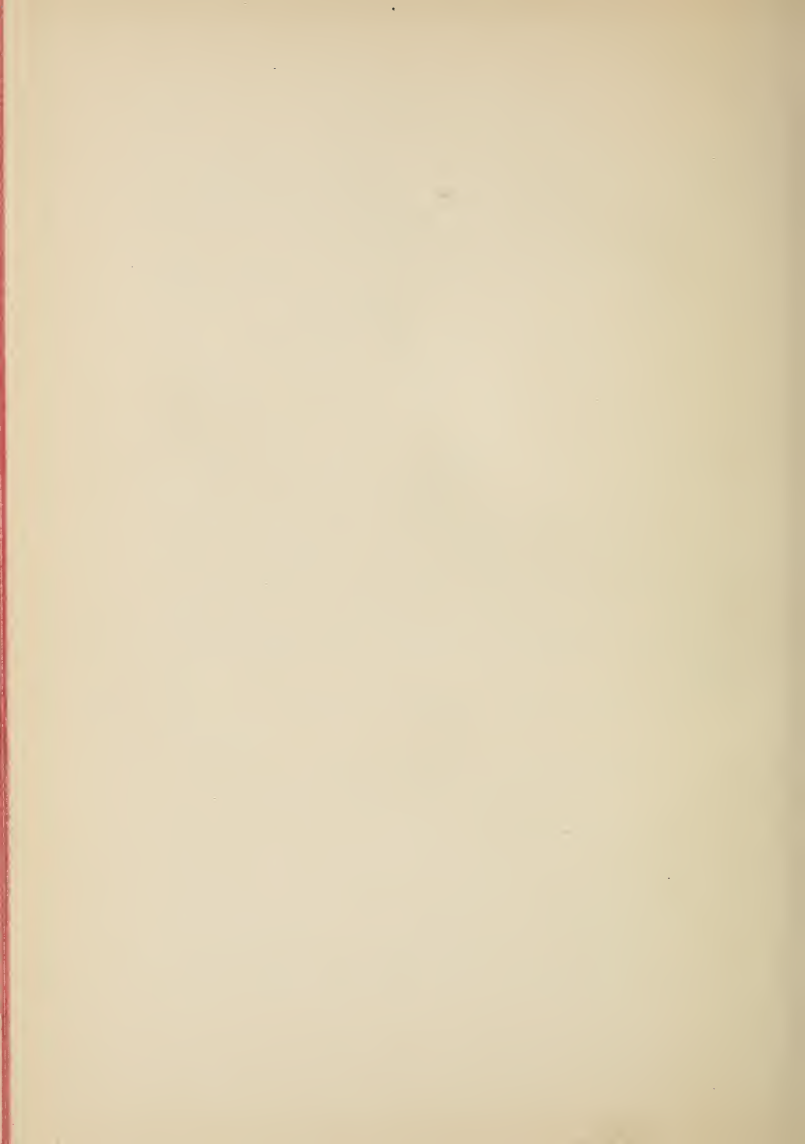
It is not promotive of a pure love for God that

so large a share, not merely of our gushing praises, but of our human schemes and ambitions, has been mingled with it. It is colored by this mixture. The old Roman power early took charge of the way to evince love for God. It sought to regain a lost political domination. The child of that Church has a like aim for official authority and show, and is often a stepping-stone to the parent. There is not a sect without its interposed ceremony and shibboleth. It loves these the best. Their air and narrowness cling to it. An adept in interpreting pretensions could tell to what denomination belongs every man he meets. Jesus would not see anywhere a party with which he would feel at home. Its atmosphere would be stifling. How he loved to welcome in outsiders a simple faith found "not in all Israel!"

Perhaps to-day there may be the purest reverence for God with some who make no professions, and are not banded together for the diffusion of anything where their own peculiarism is prominent. We call it a calamity that the multitude of the unchurched is so large. Are we sure that such have not done more for true

religion than the carnal or verbal weapons of partisans? Some of the best reforms in religion, — from whose hands have they come?

To what may the habit of sincere and growing reverence for God be the beginning, as we advance in experience here and hereafter? Who can set bounds to its increase? What a sense of peace, safety, and joy may it impart! What an inspiration to greatness of heart and to moral grandeur of life! Without it man is only an infinitesimal fraction. God wishes his creature to be completed. In the vision of God, man finds his origin, his duty, his pathway of progress, his destiny, and the assured continuity of existence. What are we likely to get in exchange for all this?



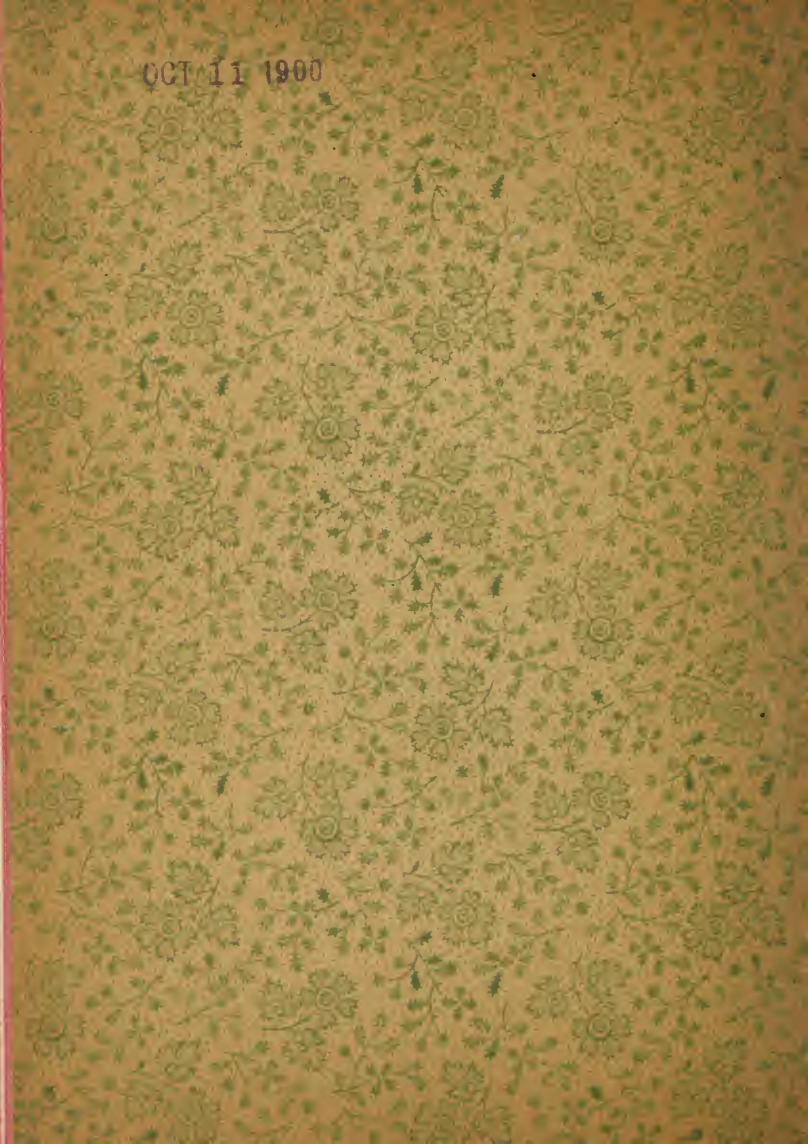


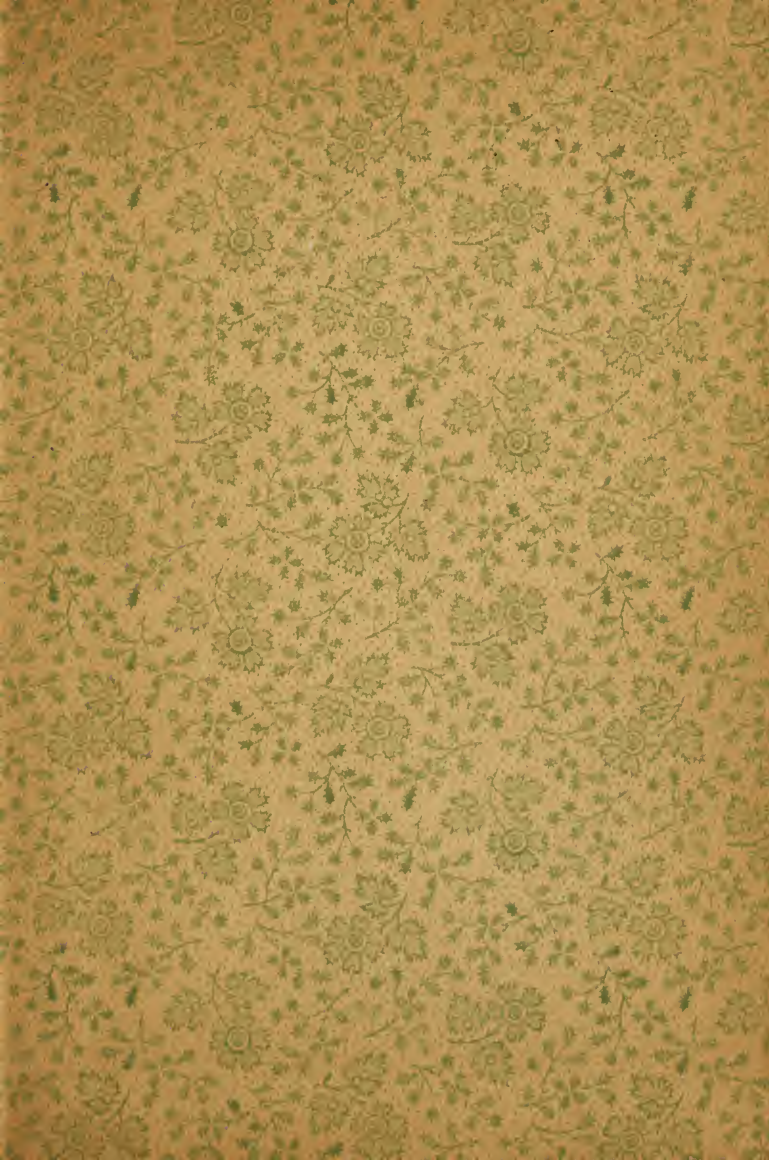






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